



# DHS Matters!

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Submit stories by e-mail to [DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov](mailto:DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov)

## Foster care month rally draws 200, resource fair, news coverage

From Connie Norman

DHS Foster Care Unit, Lansing

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May was Foster Care Month in Michigan. About 200 people attended the 2006 rally and resource fair held at the state Capitol May 16.

Jim Hennessey, DHS deputy director for Children's Services Administration, was the lead speaker followed by Carol Siemon from the State Court Administrative Office, Martin Mitchell from Starr Commonwealth, Mary Wood, president of Michigan Adoptive, Foster and Kinship Parents (MAFAK), adoptive parent Deanna Rader and former foster child Adam Conway.

A brief press conference followed with coverage by Lansing channels 6, 10 and 47. Twenty-five vendors manned tables for a resource fair in a large tent following the press conference. Those in attendance included representatives from private agencies, DHS foster care recruitment staff from Ingham and Eaton counties, Michigan Children's Ombudsman office, legislators, DHS foster care staff, legislators, foster parents, foster children, adoptive



A crowd's eye view at the May 16 rally where DHS deputy director Jim Hennessey (at the podium) kicked off the event.

parents, association officers and members, speakers and vendors.

To add to a fun atmosphere we had a magician and clown, balloons, pizza, cookies and punch, and a band concert at Noon. Speeches began at 10:15 a.m. and the resource tent was open until 1:30 p.m. This was the first year for the resource fair and there was a lot of interest and enthusiasm.

We would like to continue and even expand the resource fair for next year's event. Key members of the planning committee include Stepheni Schlinker from DHS Office of Communications, Rose Homa from Michigan Federation for Children and Families, Mary Wood from MAFAK, and Connie Norman.

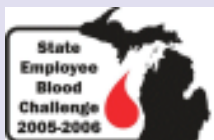
## Let the games begin!

From Ginny Flynn

DHS Purchasing Unit, Lansing

[FlynnG@michigan.gov](mailto:FlynnG@michigan.gov)

From May 15-Oct. 31 we are kicking off the state of Michigan department and agency blood drive competition. All donations will be counted for this competition.



If you are from DHS and give blood somewhere other than a DHS work site be sure to use the downloadable ID card found at [www.michigan.gov/bloodchallenge](http://www.michigan.gov/bloodchallenge) when presenting so your donation will be counted for DHS.

Blood drive opportunities at Lansing's Grand Tower Building will be June 6, Aug. 1 and Sept. 26. I know some DHS work sites are holding blood drives. If there are local blood drives scheduled between now and Oct. 31 could one person from each location notify me of the dates and locations of these blood drives at [FlynnG@michigan.gov](mailto:FlynnG@michigan.gov)?

Check online at [www.michigan.gov/bloodchallenge](http://www.michigan.gov/bloodchallenge) for the number of donations by department. In true DHS fashion, let's step up to the plate, roll up our sleeves and donate more blood than any other state department!

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## Celebrating children in Monroe

From Polly Carroll  
Community Resource Coordinator  
Monroe County DHS, Monroe  
[CarrollP@michigan.gov](mailto:CarrollP@michigan.gov)

Monroe County held its 11<sup>th</sup> annual “**Celebrate Children**” event April 29 at the Frenchtown Square Mall in Monroe. Monroe DHS, along with more than 50 other local service providers, agencies, schools and civic organizations participated in this annual event.

“Celebrate Children” is a day for celebrating our children, our most precious resource. It’s a day for children and families to enjoy a day together at no cost, and it’s a day to educate parents about the resources in our community that are available to families and children.

Participants displayed their services and distributed literature at booths. They were expected to have something for children to do such as a game or contest to play, skill or activity, a craft to make, or a simple art project.

With funds donated by the Monroe County DHS Board members, the community resource coordinator purchased hundreds of **colorful** sun visors for the event. With assistance from four volunteers – **Madge Mathis, Anne Kachar, Eva Davis**, and DHS Board president **Carol Frederick** – we helped children personalize their fun-filled visors with their name, stamps, stickers and color forms. Meanwhile, Monroe County CPS staffer **Lisa Millyard** tirelessly painted the faces of many of the 1,000 or so children that came through this year’s event.

At 1:00 p.m. the mall held a candlelight vigil to bring awareness of child abuse. Monroe County DHS director Terrence Beurer was speaker during the vigil. He promoted recruitment of quality foster families for children in the foster care system waiting for permanent homes.

The day was a success not only because the children had so many fun things to do but also because of the wealth of information given out to assist families in our community.



**Volunteers at the event (from left):**  
DHS Board President Carol Frederick, Polly Carroll, Madge Mathis, Eva Davis and Anne Kachar.



**Above: Monroe County volunteers helping children with sun visors.**



**CPS specialist Lisa Millyard painting a child's face.**

### *Some of Berrien County's staff & visitors April 27...*



**Yazmin Fernandez, an eligibility specialist, and Kelsey.**



**Eligibility specialist Adele Rimpson and daughter Teona.**



**Left: the Baileys – Kathy, a general office assistant, sons Adam and Matt, and Mike, a laborer at Berrien County.**

Berrien County DHS participated in **Take Your Child to Work Day** April 27. Fourteen children attended the event from 8 a.m.-Noon at the Berrien County DHS office in Benton Harbor. Employees donated snacks and numerous items for the “Knowledge Hunt.” Children and their parents reported to designated areas and received a small gift. After a brief reception the children were also challenged to interview someone in the office they did not know and report back to the group what they found out about that person. Two winners were picked from that project and presented with some fun summer gear.  
– from **Lee Stults**



A group of the employee children and grandchildren that participated in the workplace April 27 in Detroit.



## A “working” twist on take our daughters and sons to work day

From Patricia Beyah, Information Technology Technician  
Wayne County Medbury-Concord District, Detroit  
[BeyahP@michigan.gov](mailto:BeyahP@michigan.gov)

Forty-two children & grandchildren of employees worked at the Wayne County Medbury-Concord District office during “Take our Daughters and Sons to Work” day April 27.

Their workday began with an 8:30 a.m. orientation where district manager Earnestine Morgan greeted them. After the work place rules were explained the children were given activity books, temporary employee ID cards, wristbands, and time cards. Breakfast was served and the workday began.

The younger children worked in the conference room stamping file folders and envelopes. Older children worked at the front desk, closed files, and with their parents. At the 3 p.m. closing ceremony, work activities were verified on the time cards and the children received a \$5 paycheck (payable on the spot!). The one-day workers also received a souvenir backpack containing a water bottle, calculator and FM radio.

Mrs. Morgan was very supportive of our efforts on behalf of the children. Medbury-Concord staff contributed donations that made the paychecks possible, and the District Activities Committee provided breakfast and two snacks.

A heartfelt “thank you!” to everyone involved.

## Administrative Professionals Day April 26



Berrien County DHS celebrated Administrative Professionals Day April 26 with a luncheon served to administrative support staff at the “DHS Diner.” DHS managers and supervisors funded the entire event. Administrative support staff were greeted by a hostess at the DHS Diner door and seated/served by DHS waitresses (managers). Dinner entrees were selected in advance. The menu consisted of their choice of chicken, vegetable lasagna, or pork roast which was prepared by administrative support supervisors. With managers and supervisors encouraged to attend - the DHS Diner served approximately 38 staff that day. Staff commented that this event was going to be hard to beat next year.

– from [Lee Stults](#)

**Date:** May 15  
**To:** DHS Matters!  
**Subj:** My sister, social worker

Please keep up the good work. I especially enjoyed the article regarding the value of what we do as social workers...that human factor is so often lost in our day to struggles. I enjoy my job because we do make a difference in so many ways and in so many lives. The power of "a smile" or just the phrase, "I think we can help you in some way," goes a long way to a person in need. I appreciate you reminding me of what it is I do for a living. And you know what? It's not a bad way to spend a life. Thanks again.

**Jimmy Aquino**, FIS

Wayne County DHS Grand River-Warren District  
Detroit

■ *The writer comments on the story, "My sister, social worker" that appeared in the May 15 issue.*

Your letters,  
intercepted  
and otherwise

**Date:** May 2  
**To:** [dhsweb@michigan.gov](mailto:dhsweb@michigan.gov)  
**Subj:** A compliment

I had to turn in forms to qualify my mother for services at the Department of Human Services for Jackson County. The whole process was a little intimidating. I stood in line to talk to the person at the window as she gave directions and took forms. This person's name was **Wanita Blair**.

As I stood and watched, I was so impressed with her warm personality. She had a smile for each person and helpful advice. Not everyone was happy with what they were told, but they left without anger and I think everyone felt like Wanita cared and was truly trying to help. She sent them on their way with good information and a course of action.

Too often we are quick to send complaints but this time I think it is important to compliment a person who is dedicated and giving her best for people who are in difficult situations. Thank you for having Wanita at the window!

**Cherie Fish**

Clark Lake

■ *Wanita Blair is a general office assistant with Jackson County DHS. [DHSWeb@michigan.gov](mailto:DHSWeb@michigan.gov) is a mailbox at the DHS public Web site.*

**Date:** May 1  
**To:** Richard Burmeister, Program Manager  
Midland County DHS, Midland  
**Subj:** Diane Strobe

I would like to commend Ms. Strobe for her excellent work and the knowledge that she has in her field of expertise. In June 2003 I was in an automobile accident and came to your office for assistance until I was declared disabled. I was assigned another worker who did little more than he had to. Since I had a closed head injury, it was difficult for me to handle my affairs, as I couldn't remember anything, fill out forms, or even make business phone calls. I went without because I didn't know what was available. Financially, things got better after I went on Social Security and got away from (DHS).

In fall 2005 I realized that I would need temporary assistance from DHS until the lawsuit, against the man who hit me, was settled. Propane costs were outrageous, Medicare was going to be deducted from my check, and prescription drug costs were soon to come. I again came to your office for assistance and was assigned to Diane Strobe. She was very businesslike and, while she took pertinent information down, she didn't allow frivolous interruptions. When she was finished she gave me a printout of the information that I needed. I didn't mind her matter-of-fact attitude but, any other time that I contacted her, she was warm and friendly.

Mostly, I want to commend her for her knowledge. She either has information readily available or memorized. She has enough knowledge in her field that she can answer the most incongruous question. She does such a stupendous job that I would suggest that she instruct others. Asking for help was emotionally difficult for me and, even though it was for a short time period, Diane made it much more tolerable.

**Suzanne Hoag**

Coleman

■ *Diane Strobe is an eligibility specialist with Midland County DHS.*

**DHS Matters!** is a product of Michigan's Department of Human Services  
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Larry VanDeSande, editor • Submit stories by e-mail to: [DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov](mailto:DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov)